

Message Text

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SUBJ: BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL

REF: STATE 133108

1. AIRPORTS: (A) VNUKOVO-2. PRESIDENTIAL PLANE WILL LAND AT VNUKOVO 2, A SPECAIL TERMINAL RESERVED FOR VIP TRAFFIC, AT VNUKOVO AIRPORT. AIRFIELD IS 15.5 MILES SW OF THE KREMLIN AND ABOUT 30 MINUTES BY CAR FROM KREMLIN. A BUSY AIRFIELD NORMALLY USED FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS, IT HAS ALL NECESSARY MODERN NAVIGATION AND LANDING AIDS. PRESIDENT USED VNUKOVO 2 IN 1972.

2. (B) OREANDA. THE PRESIDENTIAL PLANE WILL LAND AT SIMFEROPOL AIRPORT WHICH SERVES THE CRIMEAN RESORT AREA. SIMFEROPOL IS A CITY OF 249,000 PERSONS AND IS 1,462 KILOMETERS FROM MOSCOW OR ALMOST TWO HOURS BY JET AIRCRAFT. THE ROAD FROM SIMFEROPOL TO OREANDA RUNS OVER THE FLAT CRIMEAN PLATEAU THROUGH THE MOUNTAINOUS ESCARPMENT WHICH SHELTERS THE RESORT AREA FACING THE BLACK SEA AND IT TAKES ABOUT 90 MINUTES BY CAR TO REACH OREANDA. GENERAL SECRETARY USED THE VILLA AT OREANDA FOR TALKS WITH FORMER FRG CHANCELLOR WILLI BRANDT IN THE SUMMER OF 1970

3. (C) MINSK. MINSK AIRPORT IS LOCATED WITHIN CITY
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LIMITS ONLY 5 MINUTES BY CAR FROM CITY CENTER. MAIN

PASSENGER TERMINAL IS NOW BEING EXPANDED SO CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WILL BE NOTED. IF RUNWAY OF MINSK AIRPORT IS THOUGHT TOO SHORT, A NEARBY MILITARY AIRFIELD MAY BE USED INSTEAD.

4. HONOR GUARD. PICKED TROOPS MATCHED FOR HEIGHT ARE USED FOR HONOR GUARD, BUT NO UNIT DESIGNATION IS YET AVAILABLE. SOVIET COUNTERPARTS MAY PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION MONDAY. WILL FORWARD UPON RECEIPT.

5. QUARTERS. THE PRESIDENT WILL OCCUPY THE KREMLIN APARTMENTS WHICH HE HAD IN 1972, THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS LOCATION THAT CAN BE OFFERED TO A FOREIGN VISITOR. THE APARTMENTS ARE LOCATED IN THE "PRIVATE HALF" OF THE GREAT KREMLIN PALACE AND FORMERLY SERVED AS THE TEMPORARY RESIDENCE OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY DURING VISITS TO MOSCOW FROM THE FORMER CAPITAL OF ST. PETERSBURG. CONSISTING OF DINING ROOM, SITTING ROOM, OFFICES, BED ROOM, AND RECEPTION ROOM, THE AREA IS RICHLY DECORATED IN MARBLE, MALACHITE, GILT FURNITURE AND STATUES. THE SUITE ALSO OFFERS CONVENIENCE TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS MEETINGS WITH BREZHNEV.

6. MEETINGS. (A) THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV WILL MEET IN BREZHNEV'S OFFICE IN THE KREMLIN. A SEVERE ROOM WAINSCOTED IN BLACK WALNUT PANELS AND DECORATED WITH A PORTRAIT OF LENIN, THE ROOM HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN SHOWN IN SOVIET PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS. NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED AT A GREEN-BAIZE COVERED TABLE WITH THE TWO SIDES FACING EACH OTHER IN THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET STYLE OF MEETINGS. (B) THE INITIAL CEREMONIAL MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE CATHERINE HALL IN THE GREAT KREMLIN PALACE. THE HALL IS NAMED AFTER THE ORDER OF ST. CATHERINE ESTABLISHED IN 1714 BY PETER THE GREAT. BEFORE 1917 THIS ROOM, DECORATED IN RED AND WHITE, WAS USED FOR COURT RECEPTIONS AND FOR CERMONIES INVOLVING WOMEN WHO WERE GRANTED THE ORDER OF ST. CATHERINE. IT IS NOW ONE OF THE PLACES WHERE AMBASSADORS PRESENT THEIR CREDENTIALS.

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(C) DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO THE USSR WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT IN ST. VLADIMIR'S HALL. THE OCTAGONAL HALL IS NAMED AFTER THE ORDER OF ST. VLADIMIR WHICH CATHERINE THE GREAT CREATED IN 1782 TO HONOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SERVICE TO THE STATE. A BRONZE CHANDELIER WEIGHTING TWO TONS ILLUMINATES THE HALL.

(D) THE FINAL SOVIET RECEPTION WILL BE HELD IN

ST. GEORGE'S HALL, THE SECOND LARGEST ROOM IN THE GREAT KREMLIN PALACE. A GRANITE STAIRCASE LEADS FROM THE PLACE ENTRANCE TO THE UPPER FLOOR AND AN ANTE-ROOM FROM WHICH ONE ENTERS THE ST. GEORGE HALL. THE HALL IS NAMED AFTER THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE WHICH WAS THE HIGHEST PRE-REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY AWARD FOR BRAVERY. DECORATED IN WHITE AND GOLD, THE HALL CONTAINS 18 COLUMNS TOPPED BY STATUES COMMEMORATING RUSSIAN MILITARY VICTORIES IN THE 15-18TH CENTURIES. MARBLE PLAQUES IN WALL NICHEs CARRY THE NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS HONORED WITH THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE. THE WOODEN PARQUET FLOOR IS AN OUTSTANDING FEATURE OF THE HALL.

7. BANQUET HALL. THE CLOSING BANQUET WILL BE HELD IN THE HALL OF FACETS, NAMED AFTER THE FACETED STONES ON AN OUTER WALL, WHICH IS THE OLDEST PORTION OF THE PALACE, DATING FROM 1491. THE HALL IS A LARGE, LOW-CEILINGED SQUARE WITH A LARGE CENTRAL PILLAR. FORMERLY AN AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF THE TSARS, IT WAS ALSO THE SCENE OF VICTORY FEASTS BY IVAN THE TERRIBLE OVER THE FALL OF KAZAN AND BY PETER THE GREAT OVER THE BATTLE OF POLTAVA. THE HALL WAS USED FOR BANQUETS FOLLOWING CORONATION OF THE TSAR, AND IT IS NOW USED FOR MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS WHICH SETS AGENDA FOR SESSIONS OF USSR SUPREME SOVIET.

THE WALLS OF THE HALL OF FACETS (GRANOVITAYA PALATA) ARE DECORATED WITH PAINTINGS OF HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL THEMES, WHICH DATE FROM 16TH CENTURY AND WERE MOST RECENTLY RESTORED IN 1949. THE HALL IS LIT BY 18 WINDOWS, AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING COMES FROM FOUR MASSIVE BRONZE CHANDELIERS FROM THE 19TH CENTURY. STOESEL

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